

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 05998 051712Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 051701Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7181
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T BONN 05998

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, UR, GW, MILI
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN REMARKS TO GERMANS ABOUT US SALT
PROPOSALS

1. A GERMAN POLITICAL FIGURE HAS TOLD US THAT RUSSIAN OFFICIALS ARE EXPRESSING TO GERMANS IN BONN THEIR UNHAPPINESS ABOUT US TACTICS IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS. GUENTER VERHEUGEN, BUSINESS MANAGER OF THE FDP, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELLOR THAT A SOVIET OFFICIAL VISITED HIM YESTERDAY AND, WITH GREAT AGITATION, COMPLAINED THAT THE US WAS "TESTING" THE SOVIET UNION BY ITS SALT PROPOSALS AND BY ITS POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED THAT THE AMERICAN SALT PROPOSALS HAD BEEN MADE PUBLICLY RATHER THAN PRIVATELY.

2. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ALSO TOLD VERHEUGEN, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIET UNION BELIEVED A SALT AGREEMENT COULD STILL BE NEGOTIATED AND THAT MOSCOW WOULD BEND EVERY
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EFFORT TO REACH SUCH AGREEMENT.

3. A POLITICAL JOURNALIST TOLD A VISITING DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICIAL THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A SIMILAR LINE BY HIS SOVIET CONTACTS.

4. VERHEUGEN ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIET OFFICIAL

TRIED TO PUT A POSITIVE TONE ON THE CURRENT STATE OF SOVIET-GERMAN RELATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE RUSSIAN SAID THAT HE HOPED THE GERMANS HAD NOTICED HOW FAVORABLY VAN WELL HAD BEEN TREATED DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW. THE RUSSIAN ALSO SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOW REALIZED IT SHOULD NOT HAVE APPROACHED THE FRG IN ORDER TO VOICE ITS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE GERMAN-BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHETHER THE SOVIETS WOULD REACT TO CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN THE SALT TALKS AND IN SOVIET-US RELATIONS BY BEING MORE FRIENDLY TO THE GERMANS OR BY TREATING THEM--AS OUR PRINCIPAL ALLIES--MORE COLDLY. THE EVIDENCE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS SUGGESTS THAT AT LEAST THE FIRST MOSCOW REACTION IS TO BE MORE RATHER THAN LESS FRIENDLY TO THE FRG. STOESEL

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